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United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme
Third meeting
Nairobi, 29 November 2017

Draft minutes of the 140th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme, held on 31 October 2017

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, 31 October 2017, by Mr. John Moreti, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations Environment Programme and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme.

2. The meeting was attended by 108 participants representing 69 members, as well as 5 participants representing 2 observers and 1 other entity. The representatives of Singapore participated via videoconference.

3. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Ms. Alison Chartres, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Australia; Mr. Nicolas Nihon, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Belgium; Mr. Remy Barampama, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Burundi; Mr. Hernan Ivan Brantes Gilavic, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Chile; Mr. Ado Lohmus, Deputy Secretary General of Environment and Permanent Representative of Estonia; Mr. Zerubabel Getachew, Deputy Permanent Representative of Ethiopia; Ms. Estelle Halimi, Deputy Permanent Representative of France; Ms. Francisca Ashietey-Odunton, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Ghana; Mr. Noah Gal Gendler, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Israel; Mr. Loh Seck Tong, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Malaysia; Mr. Francisco Ernesto Romero Bock, Deputy Head of Mission and Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico; Mr. Momoh Sheidu Omeiza, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Nigeria; Mr. S. A. Masood, Deputy High Commissioner and Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan; Mr. Marek Rohr-Garztecki, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Poland; Mr. Dragan Zupanjevac, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Serbia; Mr. Javier Gomez de Vicente Hernando de Quirós, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Spain; Mr. Jaime Hermida Marina, Deputy Permanent Representative of Spain; Ms. Anzul B. Jhan, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka; Ms. Anna Jardfelt, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sweden; Mr. Cherdkiat Atthakor, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand; Mr. Mehmet Ratip, Deputy Head of Mission and Deputy Permanent Representative of Turkey; and Mr. Alejandro Garofali, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Uruguay (based in Addis Ababa).

4. He then bade farewell to the following departing members: Mr. John Matthew Feakes, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Australia; Ms. Roxane de Bilderling, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Belgium; Ms. Beatrice Kankindi, Ambassador and Permanent

Representative of Burundi; Mr. Tefera Guled A. Mohammed, Deputy Permanent Representative of Ethiopia; Ms. Annick Mathis, Deputy Permanent Representative of France; Mr. Kwame Asamoah Tenkorang, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Ghana; Mr. Ismail Bin Haji Salam, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Malaysia; Mr. Juan José Campuzano López, Deputy Head of Mission and Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico; Mr. Carl Reaich, Deputy Permanent Representative of New Zealand; Mr. Friday O. Okai, Acting High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Nigeria; Mr. Shahbaz M. Malik, Deputy High Commissioner and Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan; Ms. Teresa Martin Goenaga, Deputy Permanent Representative of Spain; Mr. Chulpathmendra Dahanayake, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka; Mr. Mahesh Premathilake, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka; Mr. Johan Borgstam, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sweden; Mr. Huseyin Ozbas, Deputy Permanent Representative of Turkey; Ms. Angelina Wapakhabulo, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Uganda; Mr. Abdulrazaq Hadi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates; and Mr. José Luis Remedi, Director of Environment and Permanent Representative of Uruguay.

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda was adopted as amended, on the basis of the provisional agenda and the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/140/1 and UNEP/CPR/140/1/Add.1).

6. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested, and the Committee agreed, to include as a second sub-item under agenda item 5 consultations related to the upcoming third meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme.

Agenda item 3

Adoption of the draft minutes of the 139th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

7. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 139th meeting, held on 19 June 2017, on the basis of the draft minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/140/2).

Agenda item 4

Report of the Executive Director

8. In his oral briefing, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Mr. Erik Solheim, drew attention to the document entitled "Executive Director's progress update report to the Committee of Permanent Representatives", available on the website of the Committee,[1] and highlighted a number of recent events of relevance to the United Nations Environment Programme and activities undertaken by the secretariat since the last meeting of the Committee.

9. With regard to major recent events, he highlighted as one such event the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, held in Beijing from 18 to 24 October 2017, during which the President of China had identified the need to fight pollution and to improve the relationship between people and nature as two of the main challenges and priorities of the country. Noting that this was excellent news for China and the rest of the world because it would lower the price of new technologies for all countries, the Executive Director said that the United Nations Environment Programme should position itself as a major driver of good practices and action to help accelerate the transition from a brown to a green economy around the world.

10. Another important development had been the holding of the Summit on a Global Pact for the Environment on 19 September 2017, during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. During the Summit, the President of France had proposed the adoption of a new global pact for the environment. While several member States had questioned the need for a new instrument and urged that the different capacities of countries be taken into account in any such instrument, the proposal had received widespread support from Heads of State and other high-level officials, and the Government of France was expected to table a resolution on the proposed pact at the General Assembly. The United Nations Environment Programme, he said, was the right institution to provide a secretariat for the pact, regardless of which location member States chose for the secretariat.

[1] http://web.unep.org/about/cpr/events/cpr-meetings/140th-meeting-committee-permanent-representatives-0

11. During the General Assembly session, which the Executive Director had attended, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had emphasized the need to reform the United Nations and to make it a less bureaucratic and more cost-effective, efficient and impactful organization. In that regard, the Executive Director highlighted as three elements of such reform the need to focus on people as the end goal; to simplify processes at every level to ensure increased efficiency and transparency around issues such as the hiring of new staff; and to decentralize power so that those closer to problems could solve them.

12. The Executive Director said that it was also necessary for the United Nations to simplify the language that it used so that all inhabitants of the world could understand it. With that in mind, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change had started to refer to itself as "UN Climate Change", rather than "UNFCCC", while the United Nations Environment Programme had started to use "UN Environment" instead of the acronym "UNEP". Many member States were supportive of the latter change, but some member States and regions had expressed concerns in that regard. The Executive Director said that he was ready to address such concerns with the goal of reaching a compromise that was acceptable to all. However, he said, unanimity should not be required to move forward with the necessary reforms.

13. With regard to its own activities, the United Nations Environment Programme had continued to work on its CleanSeas campaign, which had been a major success, and provided support to the Government of Kenya on the implementation of the ban on single use of plastic bags, which had received widespread support from the citizens of the country. It had also provided support to the Government of Iran and other countries on the pollution-related issue of sand and dust storms, and was working with the Governments of Colombia, Iraq and Somalia to support each country in tackling environmental challenges associated with the conflict or post-conflict situation that they were facing.

14. The United Nations Environment Programme had launched a number of exciting partnerships, including with the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, whose network constituted an excellent platform to promote the Programme's work on plastics and wildlife and encourage families to protect the environment; with Discovery Channel, with which it was exploring ideas to promote wildlife conservation; with the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in order to help Saudi Arabia to develop a green investment portfolio; with Chinese companies Mobike, the biggest bicycle-sharing company in the world, Build your Dreams, the world's largest producer of electric vehicles, and China Energy and Environment Group, one of the world's largest investors in waste management systems and energy; with BNP Paribas and Rabobank, in order to promote green investments in South East Asia and Latin America, respectively; and with Volvo Ocean Race, in order to create awareness about marine plastics in the sailing community as part of the CleanSeas campaign.

15. With regard to its regional presence, the United Nations Environment Programme continued to strengthen its presence in China and India, which were the two most populous countries in the world. New heads and deputy heads of its offices in Beijing and Delhi had been appointed or would soon be appointed, and an international coalition for the greening of China's Belt and Road Initiative had been established. As for other countries in the Asia-Pacific region in which the United Nations Environment Programme had no presence, such as Pakistan, he had asked the regional director to explore how such presence could be established in a cost-effective manner.

16. The United Nations Environment Programme had also continued to strengthen its ties with the European Union, whose member States remained some of its most important supporters and funders, and the Executive Director had recently met with the ministers for the environment of a number of European Union member States in Brussels and was working with the Europe office to do more work in the Arctic.

17. Future activities included the signing of an agreement with the World Health Organization during the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Bonn, Germany, from 6 to 17 November 2017, to officially launch a new campaign entitled "Breathe Life", aimed at tackling air pollution, and activities to be undertaken under a new strategy to work with faith-based organizations, including the possible holding of a large conference on rainforest protection attended by the Pope and other spiritual leaders.

18. In closing, he invited Committee members to explore and provide feedback on the new United Nations Environment Programme webpage, which he said made it easier for citizens, Governments and businesses to find information on how to fight pollution and protect the environment. He also encouraged member States, in particular in the Arab and Latin America and the Caribbean regions, to identify potential celebrities, including actors and retired politicians, who could become goodwill ambassadors for the United Nations Environment Programme and promote its work through their networks.

19. Mr. Hassan Partow, Programme Manager, Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch, then presented the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in Iraq, which he said had been carried out in response to a formal request by the Government of Iraq that the Programme conduct an environmental survey of pollution in areas formerly occupied by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Following a visit in May 2017 to Iraq by the Executive Director, a United Nations Environment Programme field mission had been deployed in and around Mosul, which was the epicentre of the humanitarian crisis in the country, two weeks after the city had been declared liberated by the Iraqi army on 9 July 2017.

20. The field mission had identified four key issues, namely, the contamination of sites with chemicals such as hydrocarbons and heavy metals; the presence of around 2 million tonnes of debris created by the conflict, much of it contaminated with explosives and hazardous substances; a cessation of environmental governance and education during the period of occupation; and the "weaponization" of water management infrastructure.

21. Based on that assessment, the United Nations Environment Programme was preparing a recovery and resilience programme for Iraq, which would be presented at a Kuwait donor conference on the reconstruction of Iraq in January 2018. The programme focused on contaminated site assessment and emergency cleanup; debris management planning; and the restoration of environmental governance and the provision of technical assistance for the greening of the reconstruction process.

22. In the discussion that followed, representatives expressed appreciation to Mr. Solheim for his oral briefing and written report and to the representative of the secretariat for his presentation on Iraq.

23. The representative of the European Union drew attention to the "Our Ocean" Conference, which the European Union had hosted in Malta on 5 and 6 October 2017 and which had resulted in over 400 action-oriented commitments, including 100 commitments by around 130 companies, for safe, clean and sustainably managed oceans in the range of 7 billion euros, and to a meeting of the European Union Ministers for Environment held on 13 October 2017, which the Executive Director had attended. Also on 13 October, the Council of the European Union had adopted a document that outlined the priorities of the European Union for the third session of the Environment Assembly, including the adoption of an ambitious, concise and action-oriented ministerial declaration reflecting a political commitment by all member States to effectively tackle pollution, including transboundary pollution. As a contribution to the third session of the Environment Assembly, the Council was also expected to endorse 20 voluntary commitments to prevent or reduce pollution through policy initiatives, funding programmes and research actions, which once endorsed by the Council would be posted on the Environment Assembly platform together with the above-mentioned document of the Council of the European Union.

24. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, drew attention to an intersessional meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean held in Bogota from 13 to 16 October 2017, in which the United Nations Environment Programme had served as secretariat and during which regional priorities for the third session of the Environment Assembly had been identified. She subsequently requested that a reference to that meeting be included in the progress update report of the Executive Director.

25. The representative of Indonesia drew attention to the Global Peatlands Initiative, a meeting to be co-chaired by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the President of Indonesia during the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and to the fourth Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, which had been scheduled to take place in Bali, Indonesia, in October 2017, but had been postponed due to volcanic activities. Indonesia expected to host the meeting either in Jakarta during the first week of March 2018, or in Surabaya during the third week of March 2018.

26. The representative of India invited members of the International Solar Alliance Initiative, launched by the Presidents of India and France to enhance solar energy utilization, to attend a meeting of the initiative to be held in New Delhi on 8 December 2017.

27. The representative of France invited member States and the United Nations Environment Programme to actively participate in the One Planet Summit, to be held in Paris on 12 December 2017, which would focus on identifying available and innovative tools to finance action on climate change.

28. The representative of Colombia expressed appreciation for the support provided to her country during the post-conflict period it was facing. The representative of Kenya welcomed the efforts

undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme to fight illegal trade in wildlife, including the publication of an article on "game changers" in the Kenya Airways magazine, featuring this work and that of goodwill ambassadors and expressing hope that such efforts would continue.

29. The representative of China thanked the United Nations Environment Programme for efforts undertaken to help developing countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and in the area of South-South cooperation, noting that his Government had committed $6 million to the United Nations Environment Programme to support South-South cooperation.

30. With regard to the reform of the United Nations, several representatives expressed support for the reform and for the view that it should involve the adoption of a more people-centred approach, simplified processes and decentralization as key elements. One of them said that Nairobi could be a leading light in the reform process, while another said that in order to effectively implement its mandate the United Nations Environment Programme must also ensure that it fully implemented paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development with regard to strengthening its regional presence and consolidating its headquarters functions in Nairobi.

31. With respect to the use of "UN Environment" instead of "UNEP" as the abbreviated form of the "United Nations Environment Programme", one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked the secretariat for responding to a note verbale sent by the countries in May 2017 outlining their concerns regarding the new abbreviation. She said that those concerns, including the need to assess whether such a change was needed and to consider its legal and practical implications, must be examined and resolved before the third session of the Environment Assembly. Another representative expressed support for the new abbreviation.

32. With regard to the proposal for a global pact for the environment, the representative of France said that the proposal had received widespread support not only from high-level government representatives but also from civil society and United Nations bodies. A group of supporters of the pact had met in New York to start drafting a short procedural resolution to be submitted to the General Assembly by the end of 2017, after which an open-ended working group would be set up to carefully negotiate the pact, which it was hoped would be adopted by 2020.

33. On the presentation on the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in Iraq, one representative enquired whether the contamination of polychlorinated biphenyls could be attributed to the actions of ISIL; what was the state of environmental governance in Iraq prior to the occupation; and what would be the cost and source of funding of the proposed interventions in Iraq. The representative of Syria welcomed the work undertaken in Iraq and requested that similar work be undertaken in Syria, which ISIL had also occupied, causing comparable devastation.

34. The representative of Iraq expressed appreciation for the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in his country, which he said showed that the damage caused by terrorist acts deserved attention and that countries affected by such acts were worthy of assistance. He urged member States to support a draft resolution on pollution prevention in countries affected by terrorist acts and armed conflicts tabled and revised by his Government in the light of comments received from colleagues.

35. Responding to comments, the Executive Director thanked those who had expressed support for the reform of the United Nations and said that he would do his utmost to advance the reform agenda in the context of the United Nations Development Group and to streamline and simplify those bureaucratic structures in Nairobi that he said were self-inflicted and could be changed. As for the goals of decentralization and consolidation of headquarters functions in Nairobi, he said that he was ready to engage in a dialogue with all member States on how both goals might be achieved.

36. With regard to various meetings held shortly prior to the current meeting, he explained that they had not been included in his progress update report because the report was produced one month in advance, and indicated that the secretariat would consider how to report on such meetings in the future.

37. Regarding the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in Iraq, Mr. Partow explained that the contamination of polychlorinated biphenyls was indeed the result of the acts of ISIL, which had intentionally targeted transformers and other equipment, causing them to leak, and that, prior to the occupation, Iraq had had a sound environmental governance structure, with qualified staff and state-of-the-art laboratories and functioning air quality and radiation monitoring networks. He also provided cost estimates of the proposed future work and said that such work would be implemented through partnerships and funded by extrabudgetary resources from donors.

38. The Executive Director said that the United Nations Environment Programme was open to discussing with Syria and other Governments and United Nations agencies how its work in Iraq might be replicated in Syria.

39. In response to a query from one representative regarding a deficit of $5.5 million affecting regular budget allocations to the United Nations Environment Programme, the Deputy Executive Director said that it was not an actual deficit, but simply reflected the fact that the Programme had achieved a higher-than-projected rate of occupancy for positions, which had resulted in a shortfall in allocations. The shortfall was a technical matter that had already been resolved with headquarters in New York.

Agenda item 5

Preparations for the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives

40. Introducing the item, the Chair recalled that the Committee was expected to consider the following three issues, which he suggested should be considered in order: (a) the organization and structure of the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives; (b) consultations related to the upcoming third meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and the third session of the Environment Assembly; and (c) a compilation of draft resolutions and decisions for transmission to the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives.

41. Regarding the first issue, he drew attention to the "Provisional agenda for the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives" (UNEP/OECPR.3/1) and the "Annotated provisional agenda of the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives" (UNEP/OECPR.3/1/Add.1), and to a proposed structure for the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee, which he said was set out in the annex to the second document, and proposed that no more than two working groups be held in parallel with the plenary.

42. In the discussion that followed, several representatives expressed concern that the proposed structure foresaw two working groups running in parallel with plenary sessions. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that that was contrary to the proposal that the countries had presented, which suggested that no more than two sessions meet in parallel at any point.

43. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed support for the proposed structure, saying that there was a need to be realistic about the time needed to conduct meaningful negotiations and to review progress achieved in the implementation of the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme and past resolutions of the Environment Assembly; in order to do that, he said, it was necessary that two working groups meet in parallel with the plenary during the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee.

44. Several other representatives expressed support for holding no more than one working group meeting in parallel with the plenary, which one said would enable all delegations to participate in all consultations and ensure that the draft resolutions were submitted to the plenary for adoption and were not subjected to prolonged discussions.

45. One representative said that, at their joint meeting held in Punta Arena, Costa Rica, on 9 and 10 June 2017, the bureaux of the Environment Assembly and the Open-ended Committee had agreed on the format of the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee and decided that no more than two meetings should be convened in parallel.

46. The chair subsequently reported that, according to meeting records, the bureaux had agreed during their joint meeting in Costa Rica that no more than two working groups should meet in parallel with the plenary, and that approach had subsequently been endorsed by the subcommittee.

47. The representative of the secretariat then stated that the proposal of a group of countries that no more than two sessions meet in parallel had been discussed by the subcommittee at a meeting held on 7 September 2017, and the secretariat had taken it into account when preparing the proposed structure. Invited by the chair to propose a way forward on the structure, he suggested that the Committee consider the three issues under agenda item 5 as a package in order to approve a structure that enabled the Open-ended Committee to discharge its functions while considering the limitations that small delegations faced.

48. Moving to the second issue, several representatives expressed concern about the slow progress being made in negotiating the draft resolutions and the ministerial outcome to be considered by the Environment Assembly at its third session and requested that subcommittee meetings and informal

sessions open to all member States be convened during the month of November to review the resolutions and outcome document paragraph by paragraph and advance the negotiations as much as possible prior to the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee. This, they said, was essential to ensure that the Environment Assembly adopted all the resolutions and the draft ministerial outcome at its third session.

49. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that they preferred informal consultations to formal negotiations to discuss the draft resolutions in an open and transparent manner, with two expressing the view that continuing formal consultations at the level of the Committee would not be fruitful. One of those representatives suggested that Committee members send all draft resolutions to their capitals in their current form, engage in informal consultations, and submit written comments on the resolutions prior to the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee in order to clarify their positions and to enable Governments and resolution proponents to better prepare for that meeting. If possible, he said, such informal consultations should be led by resolution proponents and their primary focus should be to reduce the length of all the resolutions and ensure that they were action-oriented.

50. Several representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, expressed support for merging or integrating resolutions that dealt with similar topics and for reducing the length of the resolutions. Another representative said that the size of each resolution should be proportionate to its substance.

51. Also with respect to the resolutions, one representative said that the secretariat had made more than editorial edits to a number of resolutions without the approval of member States, which he suggested made achieving progress on the resolutions difficult. Another representative said that resolutions should not be edited without the express consent of member States, and another suggested that the secretariat engage with resolution proponents to ensure that no substantive unauthorized changes were made to the resolutions.

52. Responding to those comments, the Deputy Executive Director said the secretariat found that it was sometimes necessary for draft resolutions to be edited for the sake of clarity, to improve the language used and to ensure that they conformed to the practices of the United Nations. Once it was edited, the secretariat sent the revised resolution to its proponent in order to ensure that the intended meaning had not been changed and, once cleared by the proponent, it was sent for translation. He therefore urged all resolution proponents to inform the secretariat if edits had changed the intended meaning so that the editors could be informed, stressing that it was never the intention of the secretariat to change such meaning.

53. One representative, supported by another, said that the draft resolutions should be made available in the six official languages of the United Nations during the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee and that that should be clearly reflected under agenda item 4 of the agenda of the meeting, stressing that the issue of translation and interpretation should not be considered a procedural or logistics issue and suggesting that translating the resolutions would, among other things, facilitate their implementation.

54. Noting that different views had been expressed with regard to the first and second issues discussed under agenda item 5, the Chair suggested, and the Committee agreed, that the secretariat would prepare a document outlining the various proposals discussed at the current meeting for consideration by the Bureau and the chairs of regional groups at an expanded Bureau meeting to be held on 2 November 2017; that the document should be sent to them by 1 November 2017 to enable them to consult with all Committee members prior to the 2 November meeting; and that the subcommittee would make a final decision on the way forward at its 7 November 2017 meeting.

55. On the third issue, the Committee heard brief updates on the status of the draft resolutions currently under consideration from the facilitators of the discussions on the draft resolutions, as well as from the proponents of a number of draft resolutions.

56. The representative of the African group announced that the group would submit a resolution on lead acid batteries over the following week, and that it had merged two resolutions on air pollution originally submitted by, respectively, Sudan and the African group, asking the secretariat to replace those two resolutions with the merged resolution.

57. Prior to closing agenda item 5, the Chair invited Ms. Martha Juarez Ruiz, Ambassador on Special Mission of Costa Rica and representative of the President of the Environment Assembly, to deliver a message from the President. In his message, the President expressed appreciation to Committee members for their efforts to strengthen the draft resolutions under consideration and called on all, especially those that had submitted resolutions on similar topics, to collaborate in a spirit of

flexibility to develop consolidated, action-oriented resolutions that were connected to the theme of the third session of the Environment Assembly, which he recalled was a transitional session that should consider only a small number of resolutions.

58. With regard to the draft ministerial outcome document of the third session, the President of the Environment Assembly would soon share with member States a final draft of the document, which was based on the 22 September 2017 version and incorporated the inputs from member States, major groups and other stakeholders in a balanced manner, following a transparent and inclusive process that would be maintained until the adoption of the document at the third session of the Environment Assembly. While he was confident that the final version reflected the views of member States, Committee members had an opportunity to voice any concerns they may have during the 7 November 2017 consultations, which he planned to attend via videoconference. From 24 November 2017, he would be in Nairobi to engage with all delegations with a view to resolving any outstanding issues on the draft.

Agenda item 6

Preparations for the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

59. Under this item, the Committee had before it a document entitled "Scenario note for the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme" (UNEP/EA.3/INF/1), which had been prepared by the Executive Director and set out the proposed plans and general expectations for the third session of the Environment Assembly in order to help delegations and observers to prepare for the session.

60. The Deputy Executive Director then briefed the Committee on the status of the preparations for the session, stressing that the President of the Environment Assembly had been very dynamic and would continue to consult with member States on the draft ministerial outcome document.

61. All the reports for which the secretariat was responsible had been submitted and translated into the six languages of the United Nations six months prior to the session, and an electronic platform was being used to post and negotiate the draft resolutions that would be considered for adoption by the Environment Assembly.

62. With regard to logistics, the secretariat was working closely with colleagues at the United Nations Office at Nairobi and with the Government of Kenya to ensure the session was a success, and it would pay special attention to those ministers whose countries had no permanent missions in Nairobi. Nearly 100 delegations, including 66 ministers and 3 Heads of State, had confirmed their participation in the session, which was very encouraging, and more were expected to send their confirmations.

63. With regard to the leadership dialogues, facilitators of the four dialogues had been identified, experts were being confirmed, and a concept note and further information would be shortly shared with the Committee through the Environment Assembly and open-ended Committee bureaux.

64. The Pollution-Free Planet campaign, including a BeatPollution pledge, was being advertised on the new United Nations Environment Programme website and, as of 31 October 2017, around 765,000 citizens from around the world had signed the pledge. The goal was to achieve 2 million signatures, so he invited Committee members to sign the pledge and to advertise it through their networks.

65. A number of Governments had submitted their national commitments under the Pollution-Free Planet campaign and the secretariat hoped to receive more such submissions from Governments, as well as private sector companies.

66. In closing, he gave thanks to member States for submitting draft resolutions early on, noting that 16 such resolutions had been submitted to date. Two new resolutions had been announced, so it was important that they be submitted as soon as possible to enable the secretariat to translate them.

67. In the discussion that ensued, representatives thanked the Deputy Executive Director for his update and to the representative of the President for the statement delivered under the previous agenda item.

68. Representatives asked the secretariat to confirm when it would release the concept note on the multi-stakeholder dialogue; briefing notes or information on the Science, Policy and Business Forum and the Sustainable Innovation Expo; and the official Environment Assembly mobile application.

69. With regard to the draft ministerial outcome document, one representative suggested that preventing war was essential to tackle pollution and the final draft ministerial outcome document should include a reference to that issue, as had been proposed by his Government.

70. With regard to the leadership dialogues, one representative said that he had taken note of the proposal of the secretariat to conduct four dialogues on four specific topics, but it was his understanding that the Committee had not yet decided on the number or topics of the dialogues.

71. One representative queried about the space in which the voluntary commitments to be collected in the multi-stakeholder dialogue would be presented, and how the dialogue would be coordinated with other dialogues in order to ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders. She also suggested that the scenario note clearly specify that the Committee of the Whole could set up "a maximum of two", rather than "a number of", drafting groups if necessary to finalize outstanding draft resolutions and decisions.

72. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked the management team of the United Nations Environment Programme to share their perspective on which steps and which types of decisions and commitments should be adopted at the third session of the Environment Assembly to ensure that the session contributed to moving towards a pollution-free planet.

73. Responding to queries, the Deputy Executive Director said that four leadership dialogues had been proposed on the basis of guidance provided by the Committee and the joint bureaux, which at their June 2017 meeting in Costa Rica had suggested that the secretariat work on four dialogues. While it was his understanding that the Committee had endorsed that approach, the secretariat would work under the guidance of the Committee if a different decision was made.

74. Regarding the multi-stakeholder dialogue, a concept note on the dialogue, together with the concept note on the leadership dialogues, would be shared with the bureaux and interested member States.

75. As for the issue of the follow-up to the third session of the Environment Assembly and how member States might move towards a pollution-free planet, the report of the Executive Director on a pollution-free planet had a number of recommendations. Key messages from the report were that member States must take the lead in proposing a global framework to reduce pollution worldwide; the framework should be open to key stakeholders, including the private sector and local and subnational authorities, and set up, ideally, under the auspices of the United Nations; and in order to monitor progress, member States could request the Executive Director to submit regular reports to the Environment Assembly on progress achieved, which in turn would require that Governments and other stakeholders collect monitoring data. Such issues could be addressed either in the ministerial outcome document or in the resolutions to be adopted by the Assembly.

76. Regarding voluntary commitments, it was the understanding of the secretariat that a number of member States and companies were working on their commitments. He suggested that member States may want to focus on the main pollution issues of concern to them and how they wished to address them, offering to give them technical support and information in preparing their commitments.

77. With regard to how stakeholders might contribute to the various dialogues to be held during the third session, the secretariat felt that it was very important that each of the leadership dialogues include, in addition to ministers, two or three experts from the private sector or the scientific community to contribute to the intergovernmental discussion. As for multi-stakeholder dialogues, it was essential that ministers participate in the dialogues so as not to replicate the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum, which would precede the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee.

78. The representative of the secretariat said that the rescheduling of the multi-stakeholder dialogue had resulted in it overlapping with two side events, so the secretariat was considering how that could be solved in order to ensure that the dialogue was truly a key part of the high-level segment of the third session. One possible solution was having two side events at lunchtime on Tuesday. Another possible way forward, if the Committee had no objection, was to use one of the "media event" slots on Wednesday to hold another side event.

79. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed support for the proposed way forward and the Committee then amended the structure.

80. With regard to briefing notes on the various dialogue platforms that would precede the third session, including the Science, Policy and Business Forum, they would be posted on the website, and the secretariat planned to undertake a number of briefings on each forum. With regard to the Sustainable Innovation Expo, a first round of innovative companies from both developed and developing countries had been approved and were preparing to present their innovations, and since the

deadline to submit proposals was 31 October 2017, the secretariat hoped to be able to update the Committee on the Expo over the following days.

81. As for the Global Business Alliance for the Environment, the event was being organized not by the United Nations Environment Programme but by accredited organizations that represented business and industry. The organizations had submitted a concept note on the event that the secretariat would post on the website of the Environment Assembly, together with contact information of the organizers, and it would be happy to organize a briefing on the event, for which it only played a supporting role.

82. Last but not least, he said that the Environment Assembly mobile application would be launched over the following two weeks, stressing that it was meant as a tool to be used for participants attending the session, to share logistics information and information from the Committee and Environment Assembly websites and from the resolutions platform in a user-friendly manner.

83. The representative of the President said that she had taken note of the comments made by representatives, stressing that the President had set up a very transparent and inclusive process of consultations on the draft ministerial outcome and each draft he had produced had been revised on the basis of the input of member States. It was intended that the ministerial outcome document speak to people and narrow the gap between ministers and policymakers, so the objective of each consultation on the draft was to strengthen the document.

Agenda item 7

Report of the subcommittee

84. Introducing the item, Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, Vice-Chair of the Committee and High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan, standing for the Chair, drew attention to a document entitled "Chair's report of the Subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives" (UNEP/CPR/140/4). He said that the report described multiple meetings and briefings that had been held by the subcommittee and had focused on the preparations for the third session of the Environment Assembly and on monitoring the implementation of the programme of work and budget of the United Nations Environment Programme for the period 2016–2017. In addition, he said, the subcommittee had discussed the proposal of the secretariat to use "UN Environment" as the short form of the "United Nations Environment Programme".

85. The Committee took note of the report.

Agenda item 8

Other matters

86. The representative of Chile said that the Governments of Chile and Costa Rica intended to jointly submit a resolution on the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in the Latin America and the Caribbean region and its relation to pollution mitigation and prevention. The text was being finalized and would be sent to the secretariat as soon as possible.

Agenda item 9

Closure of the meeting

87. The meeting was declared closed at 4:40 p.m. on Tuesday, 31 October 2017.